IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend claims 1-5 and 7-9 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of automatic recognition of company names in speech utterances, comprising the steps of:

storing entries including company names and variants of the company names in a database, the variants including at least one of mix-ups of part of company names, colloquial formulations of company names, abbreviations of company names, and acronyms of company names;

generating at least one word sequence hypothesis by a speech recognizer ~~(10)~~ from a speech utterance consisting of one or more words,

comparing the word sequence hypothesis with the entries which represent company names stored in the database ~~(15)~~,

selecting a company name as a recognition result ~~(16)~~ in dependence on the result of the comparison.

2. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the speech recognizer ~~(10)~~ produces a probability value for each of

the at least one word sequence hypothesis, which probability value is taken into account for the comparison.

3. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising the step of using word sequence hypotheses produced by the speech recognizer ~~(10)~~ are used for an adaptation of a speech model ~~(13)~~ utilized by the speech recognizer ~~(10)~~.

4. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, wherein certain words defined a priori are not taken into account when a word sequence hypothesis is compared with entries of the database ~~(15)~~.

5. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 1, further comprising the step of utilizing, by the speech recognizer ~~(10)~~, a speech model ~~(13)~~ which was trained with the aid of the information stored in the database ~~(15)~~.

Claim 6 (Canceled)

7. (Currently Amended) A dialogue system, comprising a database storing entries including company names and variants of

the company names, the variants including at least one of mix-ups of part of company names, colloquial formulations of company names, abbreviations of company names, and acronyms of company names, and a processing unit ~~(5)~~ for automatically recognizing company names in speech utterances, which wherein the processing unit comprises:

a speech recognizer ~~(10)~~, which is used for generating at least one word sequence hypothesis from a speech utterance consisting of one or more words,

a comparing unit ~~(14)~~, which is provided for making a comparison of the at least one word sequence hypothesis with the entries stored in the database ~~(15)~~ and for selecting a company name as a recognition result ~~(16)~~ in dependence on the result of the comparison.

8. (Currently Amended) A method of automatic recognition of company names in speech utterances, comprising the steps of:

storing entries including company names and variants of the company names in a database ~~(15)~~,

generating at least one word sequence hypothesis by a speech recognizer ~~(10)~~ from a speech utterance consisting of one or more

words,

finding entries in the database that are at least partially found in the word sequence hypothesis by comparing the word sequence hypothesis with the entries which represent company names stored in the database ~~(15)~~,

producing a first probability for each entry found during the step of comparing, the probability being dependent on the number of words in each of the entries found in the word sequence hypothesis, wherein each word has a weight factor, particularly characteristic words having a large weight factor, the weight factor being taken into account in determining the probability for each entry, and

selecting a company name as a recognition result ~~(16)~~ in dependence on the result of the comparison and probability of each entry.

9. (Currently Amended) A method as claimed in claim 8, wherein the speech recognizer ~~(10)~~ produces a second probability value for each of the at least one word sequence hypothesis, the first and second probability values being taken into account for the step of selecting.